

Buckland Energy Committee

Meeting Minutes: 16 September 2020, 7:10 p.m., (held via Buckland Zoom account)

Present: Committee Members: Michael Novack, Penny Novack, Margaret Olin, Harvey Schaktman, Brian Summer; Guests: Kate Lindroos Conlin, Pat Conlin

Facilitator: Penny Novack

Scribe: Margaret Olin

1. *Open the meeting.*
2. *Review and approve minutes from 12 August 2020 meeting.*
 - Approved unanimously as written.

Changed Order of the Day: discussion of MTWP moved to top of tonight's agenda, to accommodate guests

3. *Discussion of solarize programs – past, present, & future – including state/federal incentives for residents, businesses, and municipalities, community solar initiatives; moving forward with awarded META Grant for Community Shared Solar feasibility study and approved proposal from Northeast Solar (currently in Phase 1)*

- Discussed problem that a resident who had participated in the Solarize Mass program had with diagnosis/repair to their system under DES (Direct Energy Solar) warranty – resident contacted, problem on road to resolution
- Discussed questions from another resident about Eversource billing: producing more energy than using but being billed for usage: apparently there are problems with transfer (i.e. transfer production from one account to usage at resident's other account) and Eversource billing; advised to examine statements and try contacting Eversource again then let us know the outcome
- META Grant Community Solar: no updates

4. *Discussion of local and regional energy-related issues, including:*

- MCAP
- Rail transport of fossil and other fuels; concerns about derailments, remaining railroad ties and debris along tracks
- State-proposed energy legislation, including proposed “woodlands partnership”; response to Northern Pass; PACE Program & Green Works
- Alternative electric power suppliers; regional municipal electricity aggregation plan updates
- MassSave program updates
- New Massachusetts programs: (through Mass CEC and DOER; Center for EcoTechnology --CET)
- Municipal lighting/streetlights
- Recycle-able/biodegradable plastic bags; single-use plastics
- Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership: *Note: this item was moved to become the 3rd item on the agenda.*
 - Buckland residents Kate Lindroos Conlin and Pat Conlin attended the meeting to discuss this issue. Discussion topics included:

- Hardwood forest access, trails. . . lots of trails on private land – MTWP may provide incentive for people to open private land for public access
- Forest threats (eg. climate change and loss of forest to land-use change) MTWP may provide funds for conservation restrictions (eg. recent funding for 11 acres in Heath); discussion of pros & cons of conservation restrictions
- We had contacted FRCOG for information on the deadline for towns to decide whether or not to join the MTWP: 09 August 2020 was the deadline, and the next opportunity for towns to decide on opting in would be 3 years from that date.
- a resource: Masswoods.org (UMass Extension)
- Wastewater Treatment Plant: UMass CEC (<https://ag.umass.edu/clean-energy>) project with Ben Weil and students in the CEC's Clean Energy Corps program to assess energy-savings opportunities at the Plant – no cost to towns for assessment.
- Municipal Electricity Aggregation Plan
 - Margaret shared charts from Colonial showing participation rates for the towns taking part in the aggregation: portions describing Buckland participation and 13-town overall participation below.

TOWN OF BUCKLAND	
Original Enrollment List	867
Opt-Out	171
Undelivered mail (will not be enrolled)	1
Rejected (at utility, various reasons)	17
Opt-In (in addition to orig enrollment list)	1
Current Enrollment Total	679
Opt-Out Percentage:	19.7%
Optional Product:	
100% National Wind	1

ALL 13 TOWNS	
Original Enrollment List	12,558
Opt-Out	2,138
Undelivered mail (will not be enrolled)	24
Rejected (at utility, various reasons)	352
Opt-In (in addition to orig enrollment list)	31
Current Enrollment Total	10,075
Opt-Out Percentage:	17.0%

- Again discussed possibilities of public informational forum via Zoom, inviting Colonial Power to participate—preferably in early October, though after the Eversource winter rates (starting in January) are set
- Municipal lighting/streetlights – Green Communities Grant (GCG) / Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Grant-funded streetlight project:
 - Information about the streetlight project and the process around how residents can request either shields or adjustments to dimulators are now on Town website. (Thank you, Heather!)
 - All streetlights were installed in August. Feedback to Town Hall continues.
- No further updates on plastics

5. Update on past Green Communities Grant applications; planning for 2021

- *continue discussion on potential projects to include in future applications, especially those that will bring us closer to the 20% reduction in energy use marker*
- *DOER updates?*

◦ See discussion of streetlight project above.

◦ Note: until the 2019 GCG for the streetlight project is finished, we can't apply for any future Green Communities Grants.

6. Continue discussion of future public events, including:

- *Future winserts workshop? Public forum on energy issues?*
- *Fall/Winter 2020 film series and/or discussion groups;*
- *budget for events*

◦ Due to pandemic, no such public events are possible at this time.

However, we are still looking into possible public forums via Zoom around (1) the Municipal Electricity Aggregation (Community Choice Power Supply Program) with rep. from Colonial Power or Dynegy participating , and (2) possibly MTWP (although no vote regarding joining will be possible until 2023).

7. Update on MVP Grant current and future; Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

- Note: planned 07 April recorded public forum – and planned follow-up public comment period – did not occur due to COVID-19 precautions. Forum was rescheduled to 15 September 2020, followed by public comment period: <https://www.town.buckland.ma.us/home/news/hazard-mitigation-plan-presentation-available>
- At public forum, reiteration of need to include information on pandemics as a potential hazard
- Because of the pandemic, completion deadline has been extended to 31 December 2020.

8. Report back about other meetings/ activities in which committee members participate.

- None

9. Other items not reasonably anticipated

- None.

10. Choose facilitator and scribe for next meeting.

- (Regular meetings discontinued while state of emergency in effect; during this time, meetings will be called & posted on an as-needed basis, and held via teleconference.)

11. Adjourn meeting